

LONG ISLAND FORUM



Mattituck Presbyterian Church

From Watercolor by Cyril A. Lewis

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LONG ISLAND
FORUM**

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PAUL BAILEY, Publisher-Editor
Contributing Editors: Dr. John C.
Huden, Julian Denton Smith,
Roy E. Lott, Chester G. Osborne.

An Historic Old Church

The Mattituck Presbyterian
Church which recently dedicated a
new \$122,000 edifice for religious
instruction has a long and inter-
esting history. Organized June 15,
1715, its building was erected by
Nathaniel Warner on land donated
by Captain James Reeve II. The
first pastor, Rev. Joseph Lamb, be-
gan his duties in 1717.

A larger church was built in
1830 but by 1853 a still larger one
was needed and the present place
of worship was then erected by
Andrew Gildersleeve. In 1871 the
wings and a steeple were built and
a bell provided for the steeple in
1877. The chapel was added in 1890
and this was enlarged in 1919.

Founded seventy-five years after
the Old First Church at Southold
(1640), the Mattituck Church is
still looked upon as one of South-
old Town's truly historic institu-
tions, as it has always played an
important part in the development
of that oldest township in the
State.

H. P. Horton

Two Savannahs, Both Wrecked

Director Frank C. Braynard of
the Bureau of Information of the
American Merchant Marine Insti-
tute has cleared up the confusion
attending the date and location of
the long-ago wreck of the Sa-
vannah. Many conflicting stories
have been published on the incident
especially since it was decided to
name America's first atomic sur-
face vessel after the Savannah, the
first steamship to cross the At-
lantic.

This famous ship, Mr. Braynard
informs the Forum, "went down
on Great South Beach, Nov. 5, 1821.
Her master (Holdridge) was saved
with all her crew and most of her
300 odd bales of cargo (all cotton)."

Another ship named Savannah
"was lost off Babylon the year
later. Her master (John Coles) and
crew were all lost. Her cargo was
also lost, except for some gold and
items from Capt. Coles' trunk
which was washed ashore."

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State's Earliest Baptist Church

Frances Irvin

THE Wightman Memorial Baptist Church of Oyster Bay is the oldest Baptist Church in New York State, and one of the oldest in the United States. Many facts about the early church were recorded in 1845 by the Rev. Marmaduke Earle, a remarkable man and pastor.

About the year 1700 William Rhodes collected the first congregation. The Baptists, like the Quakers had endured cruel persecutions from the Puritans, and took refuge in Rhode Island where Roger Williams' government gave complete liberty to "men of all faiths and no faith." From there a small group of Quakers, including probably a few Baptists came to Long Island. In Oyster Bay a Meeting-House was built by Anthony Wright, one of the first settlers.

By the year 1700 the Baptists had increased in numbers and the Newport church sent William Rhodes as their pastor. Services were held in homes, or in the Meeting-house they shared with the Quakers.

Rhodes died in 1724. In that year the first church was built, on land bought from William Wright; 20 feet square, with 12 foot posts, and a pyramidal roof considered "a great curiosity;" also a "venerable door and square windows." There were no hymn books, no music, but a leader read out the Psalm and set the tunes with a tuning fork. Members sat on wooden benches and might indulge in foot-warmers in winter.

Robert Feeks, son of a Quaker preacher, had been assistant to Rhodes, and was ordained that year. He was much beloved; seven generations of his descendants have been church members. He worked for fifty years without a salary, built up the congregation and was active in the village. After 21 years the Rev. Thomas Davis became Mr. Feeks' assistant. Their views differed; Davis was a hyper-Calvinist, preaching that only certain elect were to be saved; while Mr. Feeks held Arminian views — that Christ died to save all men.

Disputes and even violence ensued among members on the issues

of Election or Free Will, and Rev. Mr. Feeks had to step aside. Then Caleb Wright, a brilliant and tactful man with a calming influence, was unanimously elected pastor; but he died on the day he was to have been ordained, November 1, 1752. Dissensions continued, with occasional preachers for seven years, until in 1759 Rev. David Sutton restored unity.

Among active church members were Peter Underhill, grandson of Captain John Underhill, and Mrs. John Townsend, his mother-in-law, a teacher and very able woman. Many members now became affected by the New Light movement, which stemmed from Jonathan Edwards' revival preaching. In his history of the church the Rev. Charles S. Wightman states that one of the New Light tenets was that "unrestrained freedom in speaking was the right of every member in time of worship" — it was a duty to follow the leads of Spirit — the outcome of this claim being the "wildest disorder and tumult."

Twenty members drew up rules for order which permitted speech

at some proper place in the service. But Madame Townsend rebelled, shrieked "Babylon," and fled the church followed by many shouting members. The group erected a building and their community flourished under Peter Underhill until the Revolutionary War, when their building was commandeered and members became scattered, men joining the army, and many siding with the British.

Meanwhile the older congregation dwindled until in 1788 only nine members remained, with Rev. Benjamin Coles as pastor.

The following year Peter Underhill returned to the mother church as co-pastor in harmony with Coles. Services were held in homes of members, who by 1795 numbered forty-eight.

In 1801 the new Oyster Bay Academy was opened, and the Rev. Marmaduke Earle, a Stamford pastor, was elected its first Principal. Coles and Underhill, now both aged, were ready to retire, and he accepted the pastorate of the Baptist church. A man of rare ability, he became a strong influence in the village.

In 1805 a religious revival began,



Second Church Building, Erected in 1704, Now Used as Chapel

continuing for over four years. The Rev. Mr. Wightman's History had described the scenes at Ship Point, traditional baptismal grounds, at all seasons of the year — spring, summer or winter, when often as many as eight candidates "old or young,



Oldtime Church Footstove

male or female, would follow the stately form of the pastor as he led them down into the liquid graves with the expressive motto, 'Come, see the place where the Lord lay.'"

Awed multitudes from the country around and even from across the Sound would witness the spectacle. In winter Miss Wortman of the homestead at the Point "had a farm spare room and a cup of warm tea ready for the refreshment of the candidates."

In 1807 the old church building was moved away and a new building erected. This is now used for the Sunday School and for special services. During Marmaduke Earle's long and remarkable pastorate—55 years — there was strict discipline



Oldtime Church Benches

of members, their moral and spiritual conduct was supervised. Some pleas of repentance met with forgiveness; but parties and dancing, or mingling with unbelievers were unforgiveable offences.

William S. Mount when painting

Continued on page 132

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Changing Shore Lines

LONG Island's southern shore has changed greatly since the days when the white men made their first purchases of land from the Indian proprietors. The extent of the change can perhaps be better understood if some historical facts are pointed out at once: Fire Island Inlet has moved about six miles from its position in 1694, some parts of Great South Bay were once fresh water area, others were marshes, and still others, forested land.

In 1694, Colonel William "Tangier" Smith, Lord of the Manor of St. George, tabulated the results of a survey in his account book: "My Beach as Meshured by ye Ser-veigher", he wrote, and he indicated some interesting place names:

"From ye West gut to higbys house 4 miles from thence to Pike of tenerse, $2\frac{1}{4}$."

His handwriting is illegible on the last word quoted there, so what it really means is anyone's guess; "West gut" was Fire Island Inlet. Smith wrote on:

"to the Ship (miles)	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
to the Longe Cove	3 $\frac{3}{8}$
to Richd Smiths Stage	3 $\frac{1}{4}$
to Seabomucke	2 $\frac{3}{8}$
to Patersquash Island	1 $\frac{3}{4}$
to the ould Stages	2
to bluff poynt	1 $\frac{3}{8}$
to south ould mans house	1 $\frac{5}{8}$
to the gut from	
thence to Cupswage	1 $\frac{3}{8}$

24 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

Upon seeing the document, the Town Historian of Brookhaven Town, Mr. Osborn Shaw, observed that because Cupswage (now Cup-sogue) is at the Brookhaven-South-ampton town line on the beach, the "West gut" was $24\frac{1}{4}$ miles away, and is now some 30 miles.

Some startling facts emerge from testimony in the Jackson-Woodhull law case which we quoted once before, in writing of Billy Nicoll and the Chain. In that case of the 1830's, many oldtime residents were summoned to describe the bays, beach and land as they and their forefathers recalled it. One witness, Jedediah Williamson of Islip testified that he knew an Indian squaw in that place, one Hannah Jeltro,

Chester G. Osborne

said to be a hundred years old. The squaw, Jedediah claimed, had said that people use to cross the bay by land through swamps; other witnesses said that when the ocean broke through the beach where Fire Island now is, it killed the timber standing on the land which the bay now covers.

Jacob Hawkins, acquainted with the Patchogue-Smith's Point area, said that the beach "there was in some places fifty rods wide, there were swamps and good timber, and hills forty feet high on the beach . . . he has seen signs of old stumps and logs under water in the bay, standing upright fast to the bottom."

Hawkins continued that he had mowed around stumps higher than his head as he stood in salt meadows on the north side of the bay. He had heard that the bay was formerly a swamp and fresh water, and cited a squaw named "Old Eunice" who recalled drinking the water in Great South Bay when she was a girl.

Other inlets once existed east of

Fire Island Inlet. Hawkins knew of two which had come and gone before the 1830's. Nathan Post described a channel called "Hallett's inlet" as being from twenty to forty rods wide, opened before 1795 and closed before 1833. Nicoll Floyd, who had been Suffolk County Treasurer and a surrogate for thirty years, said that in 1773 there were seven inlets east of Fire Island Inlet; these were from a quarter to half a mile wide, and were located off Smith's Point, Moriches, Fire Place, and Mastic.

The inlet at Smith's Point is shown on maps still in existence; though it has long since disappeared, the site is still locally known as "Old Inlet". We can fix its opening as sometime before 1763, when a newspaper reported on August 8 that "The sloop *South-aven*, Jeremiah Terry, Master, founded so suddenly by the starting of a plank the day after sailing as to scarcely give time for those on board to jump into a longboat, which was fortunately loose on deck and floated off as the sloop went under water. Mr. Terry was the first to discover the channel from



South Shore Showing Sod Long Submerged

Southaven to Ocean."

The Smith's Point inlet was some eighty rods wide, according to Nathan Post, and it was a "swift inlet, through which the sea would roll into the Bay, and make it quite rough." He estimated the time of its closing as 1823. The dates would tend to support the tradition that the British used this inlet when they came to anchor off Fort St. George during the Revolutionary War.

The witnesses also recalled that the British transported troops from Shinnecock to Great South Bay, and that there was "considerable communication" between what they called "Sknnecock" and the Moriches area.

But from a situation of forest and fresh water areas, to the other extreme of seven inlets, the barrier beach had changed still again in 1833. Then there were no inlets between "Quagg" and Fire Island Inlet! At Quogue, the beach nearly joined the mainland. Richard W. Smith of Coram said that the beach was separated from the mainland only by a "small run" crossed by a bridge. At Rockaway, the ocean came to the mainland; the bay from Patchogue to New York was navigable through a narrow, shallow, crooked channel. In the Smith family at Coram, tradition was that a man could once ride from land to the barrier beach "on horseback without getting his feet wet." Also at "Quagg", another witness said that in 1790 he could cross through salt meadow there, and go either in teams of horses or on foot.

The changing shoreline is still very much in the news, and if history is any guide, it always will be, with arguments pro and con the question of stabilizing the immense barrier beach.

Forum readers who have indicated a willingness to join the 'Clam-diggers' fraternity may prefer to let the arguments go by, and talk of the days when fresh-water fish were plentiful in the scores of streams which empty into the bays.

Does anyone recall fishing for carp?

Historic Southampton

The Southampton Historical Society Museum on Meeting House Lane opened for the season on June 12 with an exhibition of local Americana that will continue until September 20, weekdays 11 to 5 and Sundays 2 to 5. The exhibits will include Indian relics, householdware and furnishings, costumes, maps, records, farm implements, whaleship logs, crewlists, a one-room schoolhouse and a Revolutionary barn with country store. Admission 50c for adults; 25c for children.

The Society has also opened The Hollyhocks on South Main Street. This ancient home of the Halsey family contains an exhibit of hooked rugs, old quilts, etc.

"Shrine to Religious Freedom"

More and more Long Islanders are visiting The Bowne House, Bowne street and Fox lane, Flushing (just off Northern boulevard) on its open days—Sundays, Tues-

days and Saturdays from 3 to 5. This picturesque homestead, built by Quaker John Bowne in 1661 and used for several decades thereafter as a meeting house, is operated by The Bowne House Historical Society of which Justice Charles S. Colden is president.

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May On the Outer Beach

ANOTHER invitation came to spend a weekend on Fire Island at The Pines. It was for the middle weekend of May, right at the height of all the growing excitement — nature's big flower show. I packed up and went.

While waiting for the ferry at Sayville, I became conscious of the hollow, outdoor tingling of a piano close at hand. I located the piano in one of the storehouses. A woman stood before it banging out a bit of ragtime. The instrument was en route to a summer cottage over on the beach. I wondered in what condition it would arrive for the piano would have to be rolled and lifted aboard the ferryboat, perhaps take a beating on the water, then have to be rolled and lifted off the boat and on to the beach wharf.

I could then picture the piano riding from pier to cottage over rough, irregular and bumpy boardwalk. No matter how elaborate the dolly, the roadway would certainly take a heavy toll. The dampness and salt of the beach air suggest constant attention to keep the instrument in shape, or a reasonable facsimile.

In the somewhat similar climatic conditions of Guatemala pianos had no strings; strips of metal of varying width, length and thickness were substituted. The resulting tone was not too jangling altho decidedly lacking in volume and depth. It is possible that the Guatemala piano might do very well in Fire Island beach cottages.

Before my ferry had tied up at The Pines it became very evident that all greens are not the same. No two trees showed the same color, bushes differed in shade and grasses presented a wide variety of greens. All these hues will tend to become one common work-a-day green as the season advances and the leaves settle down to being a vast department in the factory of the plant, but right now they are exceedingly interesting in their infinite variety.

I do not believe I ever saw so much variation in huckleberry blossoms. They were white, cream and

Julian Denton Smith

pink with every in-between shade imaginable. The shapes and sizes of the flowers, too, differed considerably all the way from the size of a grapenut to that of a castor-oil bean. I did not see any insects at work among the flowers; I had expected millions to be on hand.

I wonder what figure the books give for the height of huckleberries? I saw them all the way from less than a foot high to those over fifteen feet in marshy, shaded locations.

A very few of last season's red holly berries appeared occasionally. This year's holly flowers had already come and gone but the new berries were not yet in sight. The hollies are without disease and pests on Fire Island while at home (Wantagh) my trees are completely defoliated due to the activity of the leaf miner.

Poison ivy adds the red to the landscape. The leaves are unfolding and softly opening. They are in pinks and reds and very shiny. The texture seems like butterfly wings and tempts me to touch and feel. It is a case of "yield not to temptation" — in the words of the old hymn — for ivy, of all things, is no friend of mine.

The yellow of fall goldenrod is replaced by sassafras in the spring. Everywhere the buds of sassafras are golden clusters of blossoms surrounding the knob of closely packed leaves about the size of Christmas tree bulbs. This golden yellow appears nowhere else in the landscape and is especially outstanding against the green of pine trees.

In a week or two the pines will be adding yellow when the male flowers open to discharge clouds of pollen. The male flowers are a sulphur yellow rather than the golden yellow of the sassafras. The very new cones on the pines are about thimble size and an exact pocket edition of the mature model.

Clumps of golden rod provide an ever present reminder of the rapid advance of seasons. Altho the beach goldenrod does not come into flower until the fall, it is already high and thick and beginning to assume its squatty, spreading habit of growth. It is a long time growing. The first leaves come thru the sand in March and it is still green in October and sometimes in early November.

The beach heather will add another yellow in a few weeks. Right now the mounds are blue green with new growth looking like a

Continued on page 135



Long Island Dogwood, as Photographed by Edwin Way Teale

Coats-of-arms on Display

Early Long Island families with their Old World Dutch and British background brought to America many remnants of the ancient art and science of Heraldry. The shields and arms of the medieval knights had long been obsolete, but the figures and devices emblazoned upon them persisted in seals and insignia proudly preserved even by the most democratic settlers in the New World.

Most of the terms used in Heraldry are in old French or debased Latin. Although originating in warfare, coats-of-arms early became recognized as marks of distinction and honor. They were eagerly sought for by all classes in the upper ranks of society. Bishops and other High Church dignitaries, though presumed to be men of peace, became especially concerned with Heraldry. Coats-of-arms were granted by the supreme power of the land as a reward of merit, and as such were duly prized and preserved generation after generation.

One of the projects of the Suffolk County Historical Society at Riverhead has been to collect and copy for a permanent record the coats-of-arms of prominent families in the history of eastern Long Island. Some thirty of these are now on display, including the following families: Bartlett, Barton, Beekman, Clinton, Cook, Corwin, Durant, Fanning, Foster, Gardiner, Gregory, Hallock, Halsey, Herrick, Hewlett, Hunting, Jones, Miller, Pelletreau, Pierson, Putnam, Ray,

Reeves, Schlegel, Shirley, Terry, Tuttle, Woodhull, Wells, etc.

The Museum at Riverhead, would welcome information of other names that ought to be included in the collection. Coats-of-arms that are loaned will with permission be promptly copied and returned to the owner.

Ralph Fanning
(For the Society)
Riverhead

The Old Edwards House

Sayville's old Edwards house, headquarters of the Sayville Historical Society, is open Wednesdays and Saturdays 2 to 5 throughout the summer. It contains very interesting exhibits.

Our family—especially the boys—like Douglas Tuomey's tales of Fire Island that appear from time to time in the Forum. The boys and some of their pals are talking of an expedition there this coming summer to dig for pirate treasure. Oscar P. Flemming Great Neck.

L. I. FORUM INDEX

The Queens Borough Public Library, 89-14 Parsons Blvd., Jamaica, sells a complete index of the Long Island Forum for the years 1938-1947 inclusive, at \$1 postpaid. Also for the years 1948-1952 inclusive, at 50 cents postpaid. They were compiled by Miss Marguerite V. Doggett, Librarian L. I. Collection, and may be obtained by addressing her at the Library.

Visitors Welcome

The General Museum-Library of the Suffolk County Historical Society, at Riverhead, is open daily (except Sundays and Holidays) from one to five P. M.

Visitors always welcome (no charge) at this educational institution where items connected with Long Island's history, culture and natural sciences are on display.

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Rescue at Fire Island Beach

ALTHOUGH crashing seas and howling gale furnished the background for most of the rescue operations along Fire Island beach, the surfmen of the lifesaving stations had many occasions when they were called into sudden and unexpected activity. Greenhorn sailors with more ambition than experience, were constantly having small boats capsized in Great South Bay or along the ocean front, and many a bather, unfamiliar with the deadly undertow found himself swept out beyond his depth and was lucky if a companion or on-looker was at hand to summon help from the nearest station. Little more than fifty years ago such an event took place directly offshore from the old Point O' Woods Life Saving Station. The details were related to the writer by Captain Edward Baker, son of Captain Charles Baker, then skipper of that installation.

On a sunny afternoon in early autumn, 1904, the crew of the station, having just recently reported for duty, were lounging in the sun along the side of the building, speculating upon what the approaching winter was to bring forth and occasionally shading their eyes to look at a yacht headed east along the coast. It was late in the year for such a craft to be beating up the coast, and one of the men remarked that the helmsman was not much of a sailor as he seemed to be having trouble keeping the mainsail full.

At this, all conversation ceased, and the entire crew got to their feet and watched intently. Another man remarked that the yacht seemed well down in the water, plunging sluggishly as though waterlogged. Suddenly, and to their utter amazement, the boat changed course and headed inshore. She came over the outer bar without mishap and hove to about five hundred feet outside the breakers. Knowing what was about to happen, the surfmen rushed to the water's edge and waved and shouted for the craft to come around and head off. Either the

Douglas Tuomey

warning was disregarded or the four men on the yacht failed to hear it.

There was a good swell on and the breakers were heavy, but as any experienced person knows the surf never looks as bad from offshore when one sees only the back of the waves and not the breaking front as seen from shore.

Now, and to further complicate matters, the surfmen saw the four men lift a cockleshell of a rowboat off the cabin roof and drop it alongside the yacht, obviously with the intention of coming ashore through the breakers. Renewed shouts and waving from the lifesaving crew produced no results, and they saw one man drop into the small boat, set the oars in the locks and start rowing for shore.

Captain Baker shouted for his men to get out the small dory which was always on hand for just such an inshore operation, then ran into the water thigh-high and waited for what he knew would happen within the next few seconds. He was right in his judgment, for the man in the boat was

now in the middle of the breakers just as they started to comb over, and seeing the size of them, he made the fatal mistake of trying to turn about. In a split second the boat was turned over and came tumbling in through the surf like a barrel. The man disappeared in the smother of foam.

Baker and two of his men grasped the boat as she came in and held her against the backwash, while three others stood by the dory watching for the man's head or some sign to guide them in reaching him. There was not a trace of him in the boiling surf, but as the undertow slackened Baker and his men heaved the rowboat over and righted her. There, wedged under the seats was the amateur seaman. All of this probably took five minutes.

The man was brought up on the beach, his lungs drained of water, hotwater bags were packed around him, and for two hours the crew labored over him, turn and turn about. At the end of that time the man coughed and then gasped. Soon his groans told them that he was returning to consciousness.

Continued on page 137



Captain Ed Baker and Men in Action

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Poachers on Gardiners Island

I was the youngest member of the fishing smack Helen, the year before the Block Island Sound broke through into Gardiners Bay, about one mile S. E. of the lighthouse. I do not remember the old fishhouse of which Ezra H. Young speaks in his letter to the Forum (April).

The Helen was owned by Captain Clinton Rackett and his brother, Grant Rackett. They set six fish traps in Bostwicks Bay, Gardiners Island; also one was located on the westerly side of Gardiners Point, half way from the island to the lighthouse. Alvah Brooks of Orient set traps in this vicinity several years later.

Captain Rackett was one of the most considerate men I ever sailed with. His one effort was to make hard work easy.

The first trip of the season, in the early part of April, was of two weeks' duration, spent in painting and reeving the pulley lines in the oak stakes. They were then pushed down the beach over wooden rollers into the water, and floated off shore to the desired location, hoisted up to a perpendicular position, and driven into the bottom of the bay by a hand-operated pile-driver. The length of these stakes was twenty to forty feet, depending upon the depth of water, the leader stakes being much shorter as they neared the shore line.

The Gardiners Point trap site was later given up, after the sea had broken a sluiceway through the beach. The lighthouse was cut off from the island, so that it was considered unsafe as a residence for the keeper and his crew, and it was abandoned. A light buoy was put in offshore in its place.

The strong currents and winter storms soon cut through a much wider and deeper passageway, and then fishing vessels could pass through, thus saving several miles on their trips from Montauk to Gardiners Bay, Orient Harbor and Peconic Bay.

Captain Clinton Rackett, with his family, lived in their cottage located on a high hill. There was a large saltwater pond to the south of the cottage well stocked with fish, clams and eels.

There was a good supply of clear, cold spring water just at the foot of the hill. When the flood tide was about halfway up, the spring filled with saltwater; as the tide

Continued on next page

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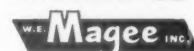
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receded the spring soon cleared itself of the saltwater and became fresh and pure again.

John Lyon Gardiner gave Captain Rackett free rental for his cottages, and beach rights for landing his fishing nets anywhere he chose. In return for his generosity Captain Rackett agreed to police the beach and the pond from poachers, who argued that Mr. Gardiner could not control saltwater ponds where the tides flow in and out freely every day.

On one occasion when the Captain was alone with his family, an elderly man from Connecticut anchored his sailboat in the harbor just at sunset. He rowed his small sharpie into the mouth of the creek where Captain Rackett was waiting for the stranger, as there was every evidence he was after eels or clams. When asked if this was his intention, he replied, "Yes."

The Captain told him, "Mr. Gardiner expects me to warn all poachers to keep off his property, and tell them that fishing of any sort on inland waters is not permitted." The old fellow just laughed. Said he, "La, man alive, Mr. Gardiner nor any other man can't keep me out of a pond where the tide runs in and out." Captain Rackett said, "I am warning you to get out and go back to Connecticut in your little sailboat. In the morning I shall notify Mr. Gardiner and he will have to put you under arrest."

In the early morning as the rowboat passed out through the creek to the bay it was noticeably clear that the old man had done very well fire-lighting for eels all through the night. In fact, the boat could not carry one more eel. He hoisted his sail and was soon out of sight.

This incident happened a few years later than the time of my story. I insert it here to show you how friendly Mr. Gardiner was with the East Marion fishermen.

Mr. Young also spoke of the blackberries on the Island. Captain Rackett brought home with him in the fall of the year at least three hundred quart jars of the finest blackberries I have ever seen; superior to any cultivated ones I ever ate. He took great delight in giving a jar now and then to a neighbor. The Griffings lived just three houses to the west, so we had blackberry pie in the middle of the winter.

Bostwick Harbor, with the surrounding scenery, and the great

Continued next page

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Continued From Page 124

portraits at the home of Benjamin Underhill was impressed by seeing Mr. Earle in church, and made from memory a sketch of his head which is said to have been an excellent likeness. As Earle aged he had various assistants. He died in 1856, eminent and beloved. He was buried near Caleb Wright, Peter Underhill and Madame Townsend in the cemetery near the church.

Different pastors were in charge during the next ten years. In 1868

the Rev. Charles S. Wightman was ordained and served for 55 years as pastor, and eleven years as pastor emeritus, a record of 66 years, almost unsurpassed, with a salary that never exceeded \$600 a year. His kindly spirit made him universally beloved and helped to break down sectarian prejudice. He occupied the parsonage on South street which had also been Mr. Earle's home. He was a familiar figure in the village.

In 1908 the present church was

built, and a fine organ given by Mrs. Daniel Vail. Mr. Wightman contributed \$2,500 toward the building, and at his death in 1934 bequeathed to the church his home and property on South street.

The Rev. Charles Francis McKoy became pastor in 1935, with attendance constantly increasing. A year later by vote the church was named the Wightman Memorial Baptist Church, and the older build-

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saltpond with the woods as a background, made this the most beautiful spot on the Gardiners Island of those early days.

What is now called the "Ruins" is the remains of the Fort, and not the lighthouse.

Captain Eugene S. Griffing



Present Church, Erected 1908

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Those Early "Devil Wagons"

IN these days, with the roads so full of cars and horses seldom seen, it seems strange that it wasn't so many years ago that the appearance of a car was an unusual event. Cars came first to the south side of the Island because there were no grades there. I remember once something very noisy passed us on the way to Port Jefferson, and a friend from Moriches visiting us exclaimed: "That's one of those devil wagons."

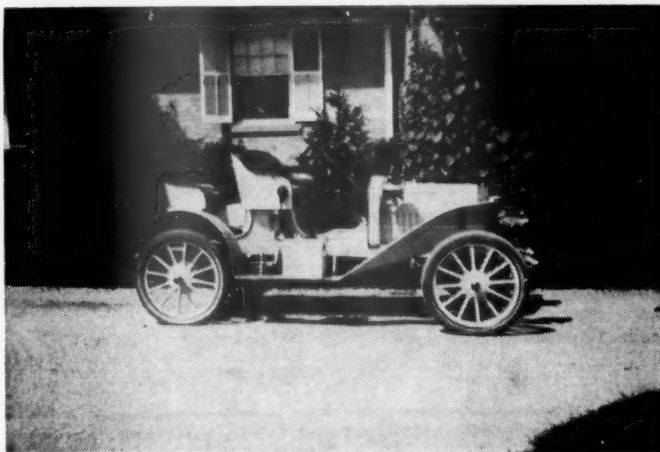
The first one in this vicinity was a White Steamer owned by Coe Smith of Smithtown. It was a little black runabout, but most of the horses were afraid of it. He dreaded scaring horses. If possible, he would turn in someone's yard if he saw a nervous horse coming. If he couldn't make it he stopped the engine and helped to get the horse by. It must have been a most dependable little car as he and his

Kate W. Strong

wife once made the trip to Florida in it over what must have been

pretty terrible roads in some places.

Then, one summer, a man came to Old Field with a white car which was particularly objectionable to



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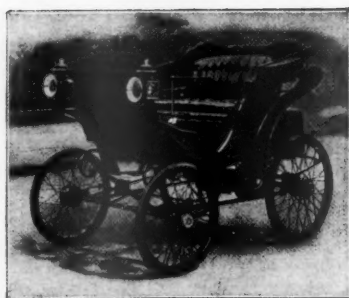
horses. There was a law (perhaps it is still on the books) that if you held up your hand, the motorist had to stop. He stopped but did not turn off his motor (I imagine it was too hard to get it started) and we thought that was very ungentlemanly. I met him once and he got out and lead my horse by. As he had only one good arm — the other was withered — it was a pretty difficult job.

Fleischman's Yeast once delivered out this way in a red car shaped like a torpedo. The driver was much disgusted at the abominable behavior of horses in this part of the world. Some car owners in those days had strange ideas about cars. I know one family with a car built to hold four, who did not feel right if they were going any distance to take more than three, for fear of overloading the machine.

I fairly hated even pictures of cars in the magazines because they scared my horses and I vowed I would never ride in one. I got over that, however. My first ride was in a four passenger red Reo belonging to a cousin. We went over to St. James for a clambake. Coming home, as we came around the corner where now stands the Carriage Museum, the rear axle broke in two and we had to send for a horse.

My second ride was with a cousin who was going to Hewlett and did not want to take the long ride alone. His mother had just given him a present of a windshield (not standard equipment in those days). He hated it, for he felt it slowed down the speed of the car, but, however, he drove with it open and felt it did not interfere so much. Of course the top was down.

When we reached Jericho Turnpike, he said, "Now, I want to



Who Can Name It?

show you what it can do", and let it out to 60. I felt that everything I had on, and myself included, would go out of the car before he slowed down. Coming back it rained so we had to have the top up, which I found more comfortable, and that also slowed us down.

My father's first car was a Holman buggy. It had solid tires, because father vowed he wouldn't have the tire trouble most people had. It did not have tire trouble but it had everything else wrong with it that one could possibly think of. They never went out in it but what I expected they would telephone for a horse to bring them home.

Once, getting into it in front of the post office, when my brother started it the car came up in the middle like a bucking horse. However, it decided to settle down and take us on our way that time.

Father finally shipped it back to the factory. The company later sold it, but went into receivership so soon after, father did not get anything for it. His next car was a Buick. It had no little doors by the back seat, and we had to sit with our skirts tucked tightly under us for fear they would blow up in our faces. The acetylene lamps

were a great improvement on kerosene.

It may be a surprise to some to learn that the early endurance tests for cars were held on the hill going from Port Jefferson to Belle Terre.

In the early days of cars I motored with a friend from New York City to Philadelphia, stopping for lunch in New Brunswick — a trip which was considered a good day's run. Roads were not marked in those days and you went by the blue book — turning a corner by a red barn, or a certain tree, or some other landmark — very much like the descriptions in the old deeds.

Cauliflower Association

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Continued from Page 127

low, scraggling form of arborvita. The flowers will be the color and character of scotch broom, the bush state parks are now using efficiently to stabilize slopes and banks.

Everywhere are beach plums. They form great heaps of white, cream and pinkish flowers. Beach plums in blossom are always fascinating with their thick masses of flowers on jet black stems. I wonder how large a crop of beach plums will mature this year around Labor Day. The first half of May has been so very wet that the pollination of the blossoms has been tremendously hampered. It could result in a very poor set of fruit as the pollen needs dry warm days for dissemination; it is by no means moisture borne.

By the way, I planted twelve beach plum pits in pots during October 1956 and bedded the pots in the garden. The seeds did not germinate in the spring of 1957 and I left them alone. This spring all twelve have sprouted and now show three or four leaves above ground. Apparently beach plums require two winters to soften the seed shell sufficiently for sprouting. Beach plums are difficult to transplant and by growing them in pots I think I can set them out safely and easily wherever I want them.

I saw some white violets blooming in a cranberry bog. The violets had long stems and remarkably pure white flowers. Star flowers and May flowers appeared in wide patches, particularly the latter. They grow so dense in places that the ground is solidly green. The miniature lily-of-the-valley blossoms had not yet fully developed. Someone told of seeing dozens of mocassin flowers — lady slippers — but I could not find them. The ferns

were unrolling and in that stage when the fronds are tightly curled and resemble the key end of a violin — fiddle heads.

There should be a great crop of wild strawberries at The Pines for almost everywhere they were in full bloom. The strawberries seem to grow just as well with wet feet as on high, dry knolls, or in boggy soil as in sand.

Many cottages had naturalistic plantings of daffodils and narcissi. The flowers were big and showy, indicating the site should be considered suitable and agreeable altho there was not much more than some humus mixed with sand.

I had one grand surprise. I came upon a group of native dogwood! There were five or six trees growing close together and carrying a scattering of blossoms. The trees were in poor condition and having a tough time to survive. I had not expected to find dogwood on the outer beach and would surely have passed these up had it not been for the flowering.

Last winter's storms have done slight damage to the ocean front at The Pines. I do not think a single dune has been reduced by the ocean cutting away the south side. There was no undermining of structures as at other more westerly communities on Fire Island. It seemed to me the beach was as full and wide as when I had last seen it in the fall of '57.

The birds at The Pines — the land birds and the shore birds — can make another story. On the whole they were as curious of me as I was of them and they seemed

as willing to stare at me as long as I would stare at them. More about those birds another time.

I hope I have another invitation to The Pines. I should like to spend a leisurely weekend there in the middle of the summer. I might not get much naturizing done for the stylishly and scantily attired residents would be a definite diversion. I'd bring you back a good story anyhow!

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Continued from page 132

ing on Orchard street became the Marmaduke Earle Memorial Chapel.

The pastor, occupied for a time the old South street manse, but this building being almost beyond repair, an apartment was provided for the pastor's family in the recently erected building at 84 Orchard street. The South street property was sold in 1957, but the old Manse was not moved as had been suggested. It was entirely restored by the new owner, Oscar D. Summers, for use as a residence.

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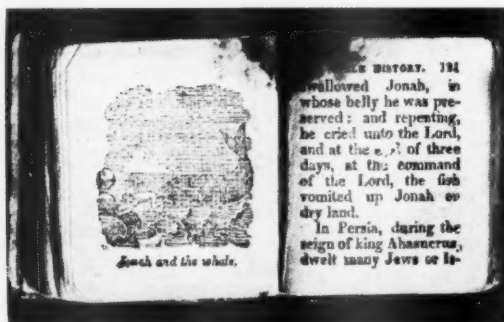
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municipalities, etc., eliminate the extra fee by paying the \$2 rate from petty cash or other special funds.

The article "Snowbound in 1888" (by R. S. Abrams, in May Forum) was terrific. Hilary Corwin, Huntington.

We enjoy the Forum as it brings back memories of "good old L. I." where we always lived prior to moving here six years ago. (Mrs.) Ivy L. Newins, Miami, Fla.



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Continued from page 129

Meanwhile, during the flurry of activity in the surf, the yacht had made two complete circles, sails filling and flapping alternately and finally went plunging head into the set and south. Within a few minutes she was lost sight of in a rain-squall off shore and darkness was descending. She was never seen or heard of again although sharp watch was kept along the coast for several days.

From the rescued man the craft's identity and that of her crew were gathered. The yacht had been laid up on the ways for two seasons, somewhere along the Jersey coast. She had been bought cheap, launched and outfitted without a proper survey or preparation, and in spite of considerable leaking of the hull her amateur crew decided upon a cruise to Shelter Island. The water had gained in spite of the pump and frantic bailing, and sighting the lifesaving station, the rescued man had made an attempt to reach shore for either help or guidance. Why they passed the Fire Island station or did not attempt to run the inlet into the bay is hard to understand.

According to Captain Baker, the photograph shown here was taken

by a late-season cottager, who saw the event and rushed back to his house for his camera.

An Unusual Cookbook

A well illustrated, uniquely different cookbook is being sold by the Bridgehampton Historical Society to commemorate the 300th anniversary of that village. Needless to say, the 175 recipes contained therein well represent the brand of cooking for which east end housewives have long been noted. A pleasing departure from the usual cookbook is that each recipe is reproduced in the indi-

vidual sponsor's handwriting. The recipes were collected from residents and former residents of Bridgehampton, Sagaponack and Mecox. They include appetizers and beverages; meat, seafood and sauces; luncheon dishes; salads and dressings; breads, rolls and coffee cakes; desserts, pies and puddings; cakes and cookies; icings, fillings and candies; pickles and preserves, and "substitutes and equivalents."

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Designs For Interiors Shown At Traphagen

The reputation for glamorous careers which have been the result of training in the Art and Clothing Departments of the Traphagen School of Fashion in New York—former students winning the Coty Prize, America's most coveted fashion award, for four consecutive years—has been dramatized further this season by delightful room settings in 1958-1959 styles by the departments of Interior Decoration and Display.

The "East-West" living room pictured here, designed by Pat Reitman, is color keyed by the shades of red, green and pale beige which predominate in the handsome ten-fold Oriental screen. Furniture in contemporary style combines beautifully with the screen and the fine brass-trimmed antique chest from Korea which is one of the more than a hundred old chests in the Traphagen collection. The chests which stand in various spots throughout the school not only give inspiration to students of Interior Decoration but foster knowledge and appreciation of fine furnishings in students of fashion, as well as housing approximately a thousand costumes.

This room design was presented in the recent Annual Exhibition at Traphagen together with other designs for every room in a house. Students carried through their



problems in a professional manner, interviewing "clients," noting preferences and personalities, and measuring actual rooms. For practical experience they used some of the existing furniture in part of the rooms in their new decorative schemes. In at least one design, each student included the "price tag" professionally figured. The work was all the result of the 8-month intensive course in Interior Decor at Traphagen.

The collection of rare old chests from around the world is a permanent display, and additional exhibits of fashion art and design are on view now prior to the opening of the 6-week Summer School July 7. Visitors are welcome to drop in at any time at the Traphagen School of Fashion, located at 1680 Broadway (at 52nd St.), New York.

Drought of 1899

I just came upon a newspaper item about a very severe drought of 59 years ago—in June 1899 when from one end to the other Long Island fairly dried up, destroying vegetables and putting the inhabitants on water rations.

John J. Krug, Elmont

Merchandising Eels

Captain Eugene S. Griffing's amusing letter, "Big Business in Eels", in the May Forum, took me back a generation or more when two south side boys (including myself) decided to flood the market with smoked eels. The smokehouse was a barrel into which we fed smoke from a hickory fire, some yards away. After preparing and salting the eels (which we speared through the ice of Great South Bay during the winter), we hung them across the top of the barrel (about three dozen to a batch) and after about five hours they were ready to sell.

This we did by peddling them from house to house and it worked out pretty well. But one day we went skating, the fire went out and the neighborhood cats cleaned out our stock of partly smoked merchandise which ended our own Big Business in Eels.

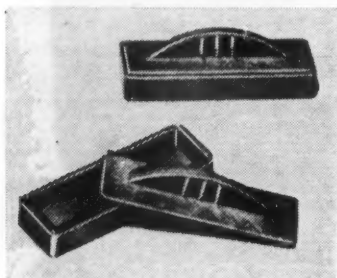
Arthur P. Dodson
Little Neck

Congratulations on twenty years for the Forum. Best wishes for the future. (Mrs.) Martha K. Hall, Librarian, Huntington Historical Society.

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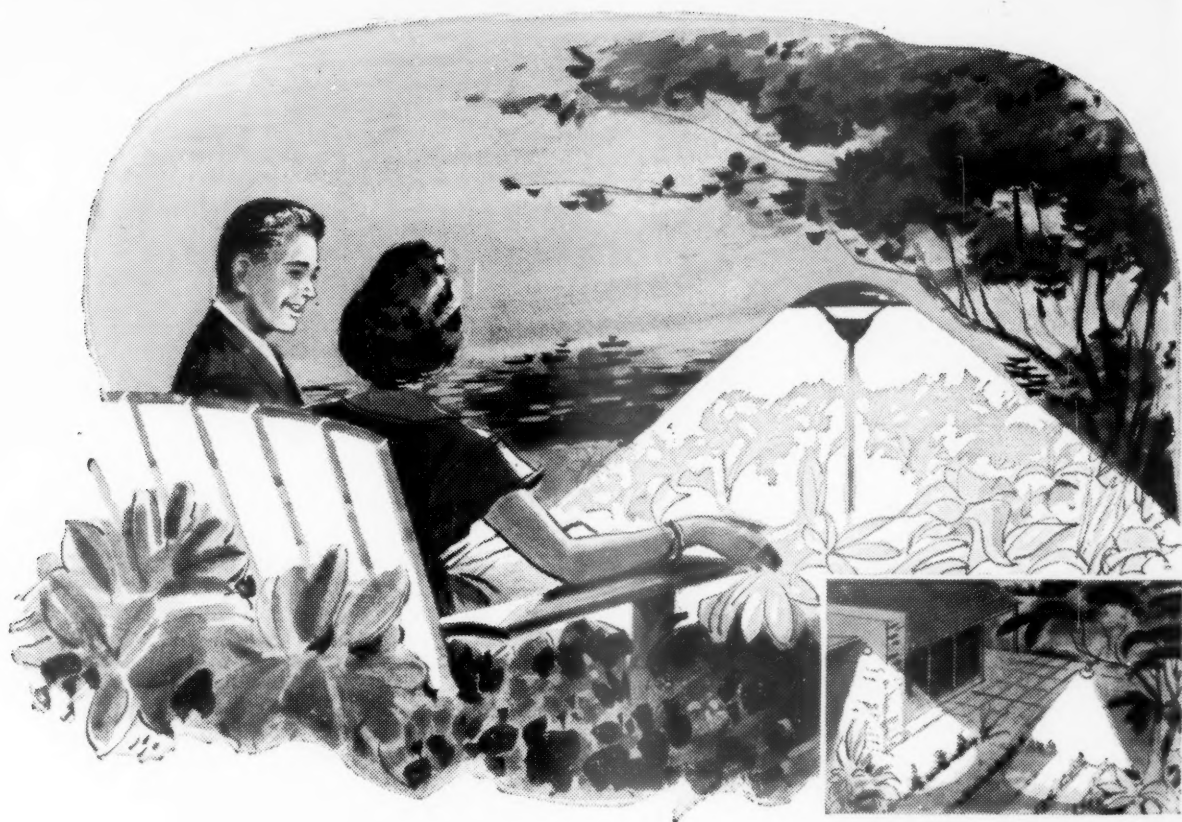
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Historic Orient

Village House, the one-time home
of historian Augustus Griffin in
Orient, Southold town, will be
opened to the public from July 1
to October 31 on Tuesdays Thurs-
days, Saturdays and Sundays, from
2 to 5. This fine old homestead
was acquired some years ago by
the local Oysterponds Historical
Society and each year since then
the number and variety of items
in art, craftsmanship and Ameri-
cana on display has increased.

The first president of the society,
George R. Latham, who now serves
the museum as curator, or one of
his several assistants is always on
hand to guide visitors and explain
the many items. There is no charge
for admission.

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